

Fact Sheet: Proposed Phase-out and Replacement of J.H.S. 166 George Gershwin (19K166)

Overview

We want every community to have high quality school options for families. Every fall, the Department of Education (DOE) reviews the performance of all schools Citywide. Over the past several years, despite the best efforts of the community and the DOE to support J.H.S. 166 George Gershwin (“J.H.S. 166”) the school has struggled to meet basic requirements for student success.

On October 18, 2012, Senior Superintendent Elaine Gorman held meetings at the school with the School Leadership Team, staff, and parents to discuss what is working at J.H.S. 166, what needs to be improved, and how the community can work together to better serve students.

Based on an extensive review of qualitative and quantitative data and community feedback, the DOE has determined that J.H.S. 166 does not have the capacity to quickly improve and is proposing that the school be phased out. The DOE is also proposing that the school be replaced by a new school.

Proposing to phase out a school is the most difficult decision we make. We are proposing to phase out J.H.S. 166 because it is the right action for current and future students in this community. If the proposal to phase out J.H.S. 166 is approved, the school would phase out gradually over the next several years. The school would close in June 2015 after its phase-out is complete.

We hope you share our view that we can—and must—do better for students. The DOE will continue to work closely with J.H.S. 166 staff and families to ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed.

Performance Summary

Proficiency: % of Students on Grade Level		Progress Report Grade			Most Recent Quality Review Rating
English	Mathematics	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2011-2012
11%	25%	C	C	C	“Developing”

- The overwhelming majority of J.H.S. 166 students remain below grade level in English Language Arts and Math. Only 11% of students were performing on grade level in English—putting the school in the bottom 3% of middle schools Citywide. Only 25% of students were performing on grade level in math—putting the school in the bottom 10% of middle schools Citywide. In both ELA and Math proficiency, J.H.S. 166 ranks at the bottom of District 19 middle schools.
- The Progress Report measures the progress and performance of students in a school, as well as the school environment, compared to other schools serving similar student populations. J.H.S. 166 earned a C grade on its 2011-2012 annual Progress Report, including C grades for Student Progress and Student Performance and an F grade for School Environment. J.H.S. 166 has a history of low performance, including a C grade on its Progress Report for the past three years.
- J.H.S. 166 was identified by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) as a Priority school, defined by NYSED as one of the bottom 5% of schools in the state.
- J.H.S. 166 was rated “Developing” on its most recent Quality Review in 2011-2012, indicating deficiencies in the way that the school is organized to support student learning.
- The school’s attendance rate remains below most other middle schools. The 2011-2012 attendance rate was 88% compared to the Citywide middle school average of 93%, putting J.H.S. 166 in the bottom 3% of New York City middle schools.

Despite our best efforts, the school has struggled

We recognize that J.H.S. 166 staff members have worked hard to improve the school, but even with support the school has not produced adequate outcomes for students. To help the school's efforts to improve performance, the DOE has offered numerous supports to J.H.S. 166 including:

Leadership Support:

- Assisting the principal and assistant principals in the development of instructional plans and goals for the school year, in support of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan.
- Coaching the principal and assistant principals in the use of classroom observations and feedback to enhance teacher effectiveness.
- Supporting school leadership in aligning curriculum to citywide instructional expectations to raise standards for teacher practice and student learning.

Instructional Support:

- Training and coaching teachers on best instructional practices and the development of rigorous curriculum to raise student achievement across the school.
- Providing professional development opportunities for teachers in the use of data analysis to assess student needs, differentiate instruction, and target additional support to struggling students.
- Working with teachers to promote best practices for assessing student progress and providing effective feedback to students to promote academic growth.

Operational Support:

- Advising school staff on budgeting, human resources, staff recruitment and building management.
- Training school staff in student data tracking systems to ensure efficient and effective monitoring of student attendance and academic programming.
- Supporting the principal in the implementation of a grant to fund technology and infrastructure improvements to the school.

Student Support:

- Assisting the school administration in the development of a school safety plan to reduce safety incidents and suspension rates, and promoting best practices for dealing with difficult behavior patterns to improve the school's culture and learning environment.
- Advising and supporting the principal in planning and implementing a performing arts program aligned with the instructional program of the school.
- Strengthening partnerships and nonprofit collaborations to help the school support the social and emotional needs of students and families in the school community.

What would the proposal mean for current students?

If this proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP), J.H.S. 166 would be phased out gradually over the next several years and would not admit new sixth-grade students after the end of this school year. All currently enrolled students would have the opportunity to continue their education at J.H.S. 166 and would be supported through graduation.

- **Current sixth- and seventh-grade students** will continue on to the next grade level at J.H.S. 166 in September 2013; these students can remain at J.H.S. 166 through their eighth-grade graduation.
- **Current sixth-grade students** who do not meet promotional standards will be served by the new middle school, located in the same building as J.H.S. 166.
- **Current eighth-grade students** will have the opportunity to graduate at the end of this school year.
- If, in a future year, students attending J.H.S. 166 are held over in a grade that J.H.S. 166 will no longer serve, then they will be served in the new school.

Next school year, J.H.S. 166 would serve students in grades seven and eight. Then, during the following school year, it would only serve students in grade eight. The school would close in June 2015 after its phase-out is complete.

Supporting Current Students

The DOE remains focused on helping J.H.S. 166 students to succeed. If this proposal is approved, J.H.S. 166 would be provided targeted, customized and intensive supports aimed at the unique needs of the school and its students. This support would be in the areas budget, staffing, programming, community engagement, guidance and enrollment including, but not limited to:

- Helping the school provide students with options that support their advancement, and fully prepare students for their next transition point.
- Working with school staff to foster a positive culture.
- Supporting school leadership in efficiently and strategically allocating resources to ensure a consistent and coherent school environment focused on student outcomes

Plans for a New School for the J.H.S. 166 Community

The DOE has proposed to open and co-locate a new district middle school in the same building as J.H.S. 166, which will serve the same zone as J.H.S. 166. If that co-location proposal is approved, the new school will begin serving grade 6 in the 2013-2014 school year and add one more grade each year until it serves grades 6-8 in the 2015-2016 school year.

More information about this replacement school will be available shortly. We will work with the community to retain partnerships with community-based organizations that are offering valuable services to the school community.

Next Steps and What You Can Expect

In the next two months, the DOE will invite the J.H.S. 166 community to participate in a joint public hearing co-hosted by the DOE with the District 19 Community Education Council and J.H.S. 166's School Leadership Team. As soon as the hearing has been scheduled, we will notify you of the date and also share with you the formal proposal to phase out J.H.S. 166. During the joint public hearing, community members, including parents and students, will be able to share their thoughts on the phase-out proposal.

The proposals to phase out and replace J.H.S. 166 will be voted on by the Panel for Educational Policy, which is composed of members appointed by Mayor Bloomberg and the five Borough Presidents, during a public meeting scheduled for **March 11, 2013**. During this meeting, the public will have another opportunity to comment on the proposals. If the PEP approves the proposals, J.H.S. 166 would not accept new students next school year.

Sharing Your Concerns and Questions

The DOE is seeking your feedback on the proposals. We will record your comments and include them in our Analysis of Public Comments, which is presented to the PEP prior to the vote on the proposals. Please submit your comments at:

Phone: 212-374-0208

Email: D19Proposals@schools.nyc.gov

Online: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/brooklyn/feedback?id=364>